



WHEN LOVE PUSHES YOU INTO THE SEA

A surprising journey sparked by an ancient love song that encapsulates the Jewish story

TEACHER'S MANUAL



JEWISH INSIGHTS

A TASTE OF THE REBBE'S TEACHINGS



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Song of Songs is written in the form of a love song between a man and woman, and it serves as an analogy for the love between G-d and the Jewish people (Source 1). This class focuses on the verse “Draw me, we will run after you; the king brought me to his chambers. We will rejoice and be glad in you” The Alter Rebbe explains that this verse alludes to three key stages in the evolution of the Jewish people:

- “Draw me”—the Exodus from Egypt.
- “We will run after you”—the self-sacrifice of the Jews during the splitting of the sea.
- “The king brought me to his chambers”—the giving of the Torah.

And the Jews then rejoiced in “You”—an allusion to the 22 letters of the Torah’s alphabet (Source 2).

B. A Three Part Journey.....6

The Rebbe offers a deeper explanation of the Alter Rebbe’s teaching:

“Draw me” is a Divine action that initiates a person’s journey. The Jews could not leave Egypt on their own; G-d had to pull them out.

“We will run after You” shows that G-d desires the person’s own effort and initiative, not just passive inspiration. This was fulfilled at the Sea of Reeds, when Nachshon the son of Aminadav jumped into the water with total self-sacrifice (Source 3), and when the entire nation ventured into the wilderness with no provisions, acting out of pure faith. This stage represents self-sacrifice that transcends logic.

Only after this comes the third stage: “The King has brought me into His chambers”—the giving of the Torah. Unlike other forms of knowledge, the Torah is Divine wisdom. To receive it, one must have humility and the intent to unite with G-d through learning. The Torah then penetrates the person’s inner being, illuminating both the G-dly soul and the animal soul, elevating it beyond the physical world.

Thus, only after the Jews expressed total devotion and rose above the limitations of the physical world, did they become capable of receiving the Torah—“The King has brought me into His chambers.”

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This concept applies to each individual Jew as well. On Shavuot, G-d “pulls” a person from weekday into holiness. From there comes "we will run after You" in the literal sense: walking long distances on foot to bring the joy of the holiday to another Jew.

Introduction

The weeks between the Exodus and the giving of the Torah are a fitting time to reflect on the development of the relationship between the Jewish people and G-d.

How did a nation of slaves, sunken in the 49 levels of Egyptian impurity, transform into the people who received the Torah from G-d?

This transformation did not happen overnight, but through stages. In this lesson, we will explore the spiritual journey the Jews underwent—from the Exodus, through the splitting of the sea, and all the way to the giving of the Torah.

השיעור כרשת תזריע-מצורע

שיחת יום ב' דחג השבועות, ה'תשכ"ה, בלתי מוגה
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A. Song of Songs—the Eternal Love Song

The Song of Songs is one of the five megillot, “scrolls,” of the Tanach. It was written by King Solomon and contains love poems between a husband and wife, serving as an allegory for the love between the Creator – the “groom” – and the Jewish people – the beloved “bride.”

Rabbi Akiva said about the Song of Songs that it is on the level of “Holy of Holies.”

Source 1 Song of Songs, 1:1-2,4

Student's
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The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's: "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for your love is better than wine. . . . Draw me, we will run after you; the king brought me to his chambers. We will rejoice and be glad in you. We will recall your love more fragrant than wine; they have loved you sincerely.

שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים אֲשֶׁר לְשִׁלְמֹה:
"יִשְׁקֵנִי מִנִּשְׁקָיוֹת פִּיהוּ, כִּי
טוֹבִים דְּדִידְךָ מִיַּיִן... מִשְׁכָּנִי
אֶחָרֶיךָ נְרוּצָה, הִבִּיאֲנִי הַמֶּלֶךְ
חֲדָרָיו, נְגִילָה וְנִשְׁמָחָה בָּךְ,
נִזְכְּרָה דְּדִידְךָ מִיַּיִן מִיִּשְׁרָיִם
אֶהְיֶה בּוֹד.".

Rashi prefaces this book by explaining that it expresses the love between G-d and the Jewish people. He continues to explain the text both literally and according to its spiritual meaning.

Rashi

Student's
pg. 1

"The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's"
Our Sages taught (Shevuot 35b):

Every reference to "Solomon" in Song of Songs is sacred and refers not to the human king, but to the King to Whom peace belongs—G-d. This song is above all other songs; it was composed for G-d by His people—the congregation of Israel.

Rabbi Akiva said: The world was never as worthy as on the day when the Song of Songs was given to Israel. All the Writings are holy—but the Song of Songs is the Holy of Holies.

Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah offered a parable:

שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים אֲשֶׁר לְשִׁלְמֹה. שָׁנוּ
רַבּוֹתֵינוּ:

"כָּל שִׁלְמֹה הָאֲמוּרִים בְּשִׁיר
הַשִּׁירִים קֹדֶשׁ, מֶלֶךְ שְׁהַשְׁלוֹם
שָׁלוֹ." שִׁיר שֶׁהוּא עַל כָּל
הַשִּׁירִים, אֲשֶׁר נֶאֱמַר לְהַקְדֹּשׁ
בְּרוּךְ הוּא מֵאֵת עֲדָתוֹ וְעַמּוֹ,
כְּנֶסֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל.

אָמַר רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא: "לֹא הָיָה
הָעוֹלָם כְּדָאִי כּוּיּוֹם שֶׁנֶּתַן בּוֹ שִׁיר
הַשִּׁירִים לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, שֶׁכָּל
הַכְּתוּבִים קֹדֶשׁ וְשִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים
קֹדֶשׁ קְדָשִׁים."

אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן עֲזַרְיָה:
"לָמָּה הִדְבֵּר דּוּמָה?"

Student's
pg. 1

A king gave a se'ah measure of wheat to a baker and told him, "Separate from it fine flour, bran, and coarse bran, and produce one pure white loaf." So too, all the Writings are holy, but the Song of Songs is the purest—it is entirely about fear of Heaven and acceptance of the yoke of G-d's kingship.

לְמֶלֶךְ שֶׁנָּטַל סֵאָה חֲטִימִים וּנְתָנָהּ
לְנַחֲתוֹם. אָמַר לוֹ: 'הוֹצֵא לִי כֶּךָ וְכֶךָ
סֵלֶת, כֶּךָ וְכֶךָ סִבִּין, כֶּךָ וְכֶךָ מֶרְסָן,
וְסָלִית לִי מִתּוֹכָהּ גִּלְסָקִיָּא אַחַת,
מִנֶּפֶח וּמַעֲלָה'. כֶּךָ, כָּל הַכְּתוּבִים
קֹדֶשׁ, וְשִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים קֹדֶשׁ קֹדֶשִׁים,
שֶׁכָּלּוּ יִרְאֵת שָׁמַיִם וְקַבּוּל עַל
מַלְכוּתוֹ":

Student's
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"Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth:" This is Israel's voice, sung in exile and widowhood: "If only King Solomon—G-d—would kiss me again with the kisses of His mouth, as He did in the past." In some places, people kiss on the back of the hand or the shoulder—but here, she longs for the closeness and love of earlier days, like a bridegroom with his bride—mouth to mouth.

יִשְׁקֵנִי מִנִּשְׁקוֹת פִּיהוּ. זֶה הַשִּׁיר
אוֹמֶרֶת בְּפִיהָ בְּגִלוּתָהּ וּבְאַלְמָנוּתָהּ:
"מִי יִתֵּן וְיִשְׁקֵנִי הַמֶּלֶךְ שְׁלֹמֹה
מִנִּשְׁקוֹת פִּיהוּ כִּמוֹ מֵאָז, לְפִי שִׁישׁ
מְקוֹמוֹת שְׁנוֹשְׁקִין עַל גֵּב הַיָּד וְעַל
הַכֶּתֶף, אֲךָ אֲנִי מִתְאַוֶּה וְשׁוֹקֵקֶת
לְהִיטוֹת נֹהֵג עִמִּי כַּמִּנְהֵג הָרִאשׁוֹן,
כְּחֶתֶן אֶל כְּלָה, פֶּה אֶל פֶּה".

"For your love is better than wine:" Your love is more delightful to me than any wine or joyous feast. In Hebrew, wine is often used to describe all forms of joy and celebration, as in: "To the house of the wine feast" (Esther 7:8), "With song they shall not drink wine" (Isaiah 24:9), "There were harp and lute... and wine at their feasts" (Isaiah 5:12).

כִּי טוֹבִים. לִי דוּדִיךְ מִכָּל מִשְׁתֵּה
יַיִן וּמִכָּל עֲנָג וְשִׁמְחָה. וְלִשׁוֹן עֲבָרִי
הוּא לְהִיטוֹת כָּל סַעֲדַת עֲנָג וְשִׁמְחָה
נִקְרָאת עַל שֵׁם הַיַּיִן, כַּעֲנָן שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר
"אֶל בֵּית מִשְׁתֵּה הַיַּיִן", "בְּשִׁיר לֹא
יִשְׁתּוּ יַיִן", "וְהָיָה כְּגֹר וְנִבֵּל תִּהְיֶה
וְחָלִיל וַיַּיִן מִשְׁתֵּיהֶם".

This verse reflects Israel's desire for G-d's closeness through Torah. The metaphor of kissing represents the giving of the Torah, when G-d spoke to them face to face. That Divine love remains sweeter to them than all worldly pleasures. They yearn for G-d to fulfill His promise to appear again and reveal the inner secrets and mysteries of His Torah. This is the meaning of "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth."

זֶהוּ בְּאוֹר מִשְׁמַעוֹ. וְנֶאֱמַר דִּגְמָא
שָׁלוּ עַל שֵׁם שְׁנָתָן לָהֶם תּוֹרָתוֹ
וְדָבַר עִמָּהֶם פָּנִים אֶל פָּנִים. וְאוֹתָם
דּוֹדִים עוֹדִם עֲרָבִים עֲלִיהֶם מִכָּל
שַׁעֲשׁוּעַ. וּמִבְטָחִים מֵאֲתוֹ לְהוֹפִיעַ
עוֹד עֲלִיהֶם לְבָאֵר לָהֶם סוֹד
טַעְמִיהָ וּמִסְתָּר צְפוּנוֹתֶיהָ, וּמַחֲלִים
פָּנָיו לָקִים דְּבָרוֹ. וְזֶהוּ: "יִשְׁקֵנִי
מִנִּשְׁקוֹת פִּיהוּ".

The mouth-to-mouth kiss represents the words of Torah that G-d lovingly gave to His people. These words are more delightful to them than any celebration or pleasure, and it is toward them that the Jewish people long and yearn.

Metzudat David

Student's
pg. 2

Draw me: Draw me just a little,
and then I will run after you
quickly.

מְשַׁכְּנִי. מִשְׁךְ אוֹתִי אֵלֶיךָ
מְשִׁיכָה מוֹעֲטָת, וְאֲנִי
אֲרוּץ אַחֲרֶיךָ בְּמַהֲרָה
רַב.

Student's
pg. 2

The king brought me to his chambers: You, who are beloved in my eyes like a king, bring me to your room, and I will rejoice in you, recalling the love that is better than wine.

הַבִּיאֲנִי הַמֶּלֶךְ הַדָּרִי. וּבָזָה
אֶתָּה הַחֲשׂוֹן הַחֲבִיב בְּעֵינַי
כְּמֶלֶךְ תִּבְיָא אוֹתִי אֶל
הַדָּרִי, וְשֵׁם אֲגִיל וְאַשְׁמַח
בָּךְ וְאַזְכִּיר הַדּוּדִים הַטּוֹבִים
מִמִּשְׁתֵּה הַיַּיִן.

Student's
pg. 3

The analogue is: The Jewish people said to G-d, "Show us a hint of love and salvation and we will come running back with a complete heart. When you bring us back to the Holy Temple we will rejoice in your salvation and thank you for all your wonders and saving."

וְהִנֵּמְשֵׁל הוּא לֹמֵר
שְׂאֲמָרָה כְּנֶסֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל
הִרְאָה לִי רִמְזֵי יְשׁוּעָה וְחֶבֶד
וְאִזְ אֲמַהֵר לָשׁוּב אֵלֶיךָ בְּכָל
לֵב, וְעַל יְדֵי זֶה הִבִּיאֲנִי אֶל
בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ אֲגִיל וְאַשְׁמַח
בִּישׁוּעָתְךָ, וְאַזְכִּיר לְהוֹדוֹת
לָךְ עַל הַנִּפְלְאוֹת וְעַל
הַתְּשׁוּעוֹת.

On the simple level, the bride says to the groom, "Draw me a little, and then I will run after you, and we will enter your home."

The deeper spiritual meaning is that the Jewish people say to G-d: "You initiate by revealing Your love for us, and that will awaken our desire to draw close to You. Then, bring us into the Holy Temple, where we can rejoice together."

The Alter Rebbe offered an even deeper interpretation of this verse, explaining it as a reflection of the historical and spiritual progression: The Exodus from Egypt, the splitting of the sea, and finally, the giving of the Torah on Shavuot.

The Deeper Meaning

Source 2 Sichra, first day of Shavuot, 5703 [1943]

Student's
pg. 3

When the Alter Rebbe was a student of Rabbi Mendel of Horodok, the latter would send him on different missions for various things. Once, the Alter Rebbe arrived in a town, and gave an interpretation of the verse "Draw me..." As is well-known, before his imprisonment in St. Petersburg, the Alter Rebbe would deliver brief discourses

בְּזִמְנֵי שְׁהוּד כְּבוֹד קִדְשָׁת אֲדָמוֹ"ר
הִזְקֵן הָיָה צִדִּין תַּלְמִיד חֵבֶר לְרַבִּי
מְנַחֵם מַעֲגִיד מְהוֹרֹדוֹק, שֶׁהָיָה שׂוֹלֵחַ
אוֹתוֹ לְנִסְיָעוֹת שׁוֹנוֹת בְּגִלְל עֲנִיָּוִים
שׁוֹנִים, בָּא פָּעַם הוּד כְּבוֹד קִדְשָׁת
אֲדָמוֹ"ר הִזְקֵן בְּעִיר מְסִימָת, שֵׁם
אָמַר תּוֹרָה עַל הַפְּסוּק מִשְׁכְּנֵי אַחֲרֶיךָ
נִרְוָצָה. (כִּידוּעַ אָמַר הוּד כְּבוֹד קִדְשָׁת
אֲדָמוֹ"ר הִזְקֵן לִפְנֵי פֶטֶרבוּרְג "תּוֹרוֹת"
— מֵאַמְרִים קְצָרִים).

The Alter Rebbe and Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Horodok were both students of the second leader of the Chassidic movement—the Maggid of Mezritch. Rabbi Menachem Mendel was one of the senior disciples, while the Alter Rebbe was among the younger ones.

After the passing of the Maggid, the Alter Rebbe became both a student and a close colleague of Rabbi Menachem Mendel, often traveling on his behalf to carry out missions for the dissemination and establishment of Chassidic teachings.

At that time, Chassidut was just beginning to flourish. The teachings were brief yet incredibly deep, and not everyone was able to grasp their full meaning.

In later years, the Alter Rebbe developed the Chabad approach, where Chassidic teachings were explained and made accessible through Chochmah (wisdom), Binah (understanding), and Da'at (knowledge).

The teaching before us, however, is different from most Chabad teachings—it is unusually brief:

Student's “Draw me”—the Exodus from Egypt.
pg. 3

“We will run after you”—the self-sacrifice of the Jews during the splitting of the sea.

“The king brought me to his chambers”—the giving of the Torah.

And the simple Jews then rejoiced in “You”—referring to the 22 letters of the Torah’s alphabet.”

This teaching aroused great interest. One of the elder Chassidim, Reb Boruch, recalled exactly where the Alter Rebbe said it.

מִשְׁכְּנִי – יְצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם, אֲחֵרֶיךָ
נְרוּצָה – מַסִּירוֹת הַנֶּפֶשׁ שֶׁל
קָרִיעַת יָם סוּף עֲשֵׂתָה אֶת הַנְּרוּצָה,
הַבִּיאֲנִי הַמֶּלֶךְ הַדָּרִי – מִתֵּן תּוֹרָה.
בְּתוֹרָה יִשְׁנֶן הַרְבֵּה מְדַרְגּוֹת, וְמָה
עָשׂוּ הַיְּהוּדִים הַפְּשׁוּטִים? נִגִּילָה
וְנִשְׁמָחָה “כָּךְ” – בְּכ”ב אוֹתִיּוֹת
הַתּוֹרָה.

תּוֹרָתוֹ זוֹ שֶׁל הוּד כְּבוֹד קִדְשָׁת
אֲדָמוֹר הַזֶּקֶן עוֹרְרָה אֲזַרְעֵשׁ
גָּדוֹל. אֶחָד מֵהַחֲסִידִים הַקְּשִׁישִׁים,
ר' בְּרוּךְ, זָכַר אֶת הַמָּקוֹם שֶׁם אָמַר
הוּד כְּבוֹד קִדְשָׁת אֲדָמוֹר הַזֶּקֶן
תּוֹרָה זוֹ.

Honoring holy words

After the Rebbe Rayatz said this story, he explained what the “joy of the simple Jews” means:

Student's In the past, there was respect for the
pg. 4 letters of the Torah, stemming from fear of heaven. This was evident even among the simple Jews. Before saying a blessing, they would wash their hands, or at least wipe them ... It was instilled in them that before making a blessing, you must ritually cleanse your hands.

בְּעֵבֶר הִיְתָה דְּרֹךְ אֶרֶץ פְּלִפִּי אוֹתִיּוֹת
הַתּוֹרָה, הַדְּבָר נִבְע מִירְאַת שָׁמַיִם.
גַּם בְּיַהוּדִים הַפְּשׁוּטִים נִרְאָה דְּבָר
זֶה בְּמוֹחָשׁ. פְּשָׁהּיוּ צְרִיכִים לְכַרֵּךְ
בְּרָכָה, נָטְלוּ לִפְנֵי זֶה אֶת הַיָּדִים,
אוֹ לְכָל הַפְּחוֹת נִגְבּוֹ אוֹתָן בְּעֵשְׂבִים
וּבְעֵפֶר... הָיָה מְשֻׁרֵשׁ בָּהֶם שֶׁלִּפְנֵי
בְּרָכָה מִן הַהֶכְרֵחַ שֶׁתִּהְיֶה נִטְיָלָה.

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As a child, I was once playing, making a toy boat, when I overheard the gardener reciting the blessing of shehakol, and I trembled. Today, people don't "hear" their blessings, their blessings don't "hear" them.

בְּיָלְדוּתִי שִׁחְקָתִי פָעַם בְּעֵשִׂית
אֲנִית צִעְצוּעַ, וּבְדֶרֶךְ אֲגַב שָׁמַעְתִּי
גִּנָּן אֹמֵר בְּרַכַּת שֶׁהַכֹּל נִהְיָה
בְּדִבְרוֹ – וְנִחְרָדְתִּי. וְאֵלּוּ כִּיּוֹם –
הָרִי אֵין הוּא שׁוֹמֵעַ אֶת הַבְּרָכָה
וְאֵין הַבְּרָכָה שׁוֹמֵעַת אוֹתוֹ.

In the past, when a simple Jew would recite a blessing—even if he didn't understand all the meanings and intentions behind each word—he still sensed that the words he was saying were holy. That's why, before making a blessing, he would wash his hands, just as we do before prayer.

The Rebbe Rayatz (Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn) shared his memory of when the gardener would say a blessing. It was something serious and moving, leaving a deep impression on him as a child.

But today, the Frierdiker Rebbe goes on to say, people recite blessings without feeling that they've done anything significant. The words leave their mouths without any real thought.

B. A Three Part Spiritual Journey

>> The Rebbe

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The simple meaning is that the letters of the Torah are relatable for everyone, including simple people. But on a deeper level, it is specifically in "Let us rejoice and be glad in you"—referring to the 22 letters of the Torah—that the true meaning of receiving the Torah is expressed.

והנה, הפירוש הפשוט בזה - שכאשר מדובר אודות אותיות התורה, הרי זה ענין השייך לכל, גם לאנשים פשוטים; אבל בעומק יותר, הנה דוקא בענין של "נגילה ונשמחה בך" - בכ"ב אותיות התורה - בא לידי ביטוי ענין קבלת התורה לאמיתתו.

In the Rebbe Rayatz's address it was explained that the letters of the Torah, in their simple sense, also belong to simple people. However, in a later talk, the Rebbe introduced a deeper layer to the 22 letters of the Torah.

Arousal from above—draw me

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The meaning of "draw me" is that G-d is the one who draws the person out—it's not something the person does on their own. This is how it was with the Exodus from Egypt: the people themselves couldn't leave on their own. As the sages said, even a slave couldn't escape from there. This is why G-d had to take them out of Egypt—"draw me."

והענין בזה: הפירוש של "משכני" הוא - שהקב"ה מושך ומוציא אותו, ולא שהוא בעצמו יוצא. ובאופן כזה היתה היציאה ממצרים - שהרי בני ישראל עצמם לא היו יכולים לצאת ממצרים, כמאמר רז"ל¹ שאפילו עבד לא היה יכול לברוח משם, ולכן הוצרך הקב"ה להוציא אותם ממצרים - "משכני".

The Sages say that the Exodus from Egypt was impossible because the bondage was unbearable and the cruel Egyptian regime oppressed every citizen, lowering their stature. Even a slave could not escape Egypt because it was closed off and sealed. Therefore, G-d Himself took them out with a mighty hand and an upright stature, in front of the incredulous eyes of the Egyptians.

Even spiritually, the Jewish people could not free themselves from the impurity of Egypt. They were immersed in impurity and there was a tremendous accusation against them: they had become

1. מכילתא יתרו יז, יא. פרש"י שם, ט.

influenced by Egyptian idol worship, to the point where they too were involved in idolatry and sunk deep into impurity. Had they delayed in Egypt, they would no longer have been redeemable, for they would have lost their Jewish identity. Therefore, the Jewish people needed G-d to bring about an awakening from above and draw them out of the impurity.

We learn from this that the revelation on the first day of Passover was a revelation that took place through an arousal from above, meaning it was not dependent on human effort. This means that the service of G-d from below (the self-effort of the people of Israel) began only after the Exodus from Egypt. During the Exodus itself, on the other hand, the awakening came from above to below, because the Jewish people were in a state of deep impurity, meaning they were heavily influenced by evil. Therefore, they needed G-d to reveal Himself and pull them out of the mire—"draw me."

This also happens in our everyday lives. There are times when we feel lost and trapped, unable to help ourselves. Everything seems to be going against us, and we can't find the strength within ourselves to resist and rise above it. Then suddenly, we feel someone pulling us out of the mud. We wake up in the morning, and all of that is behind us. At that moment, we experienced an arousal from above—G-d extended His hand and helped us rise.

Just as G-d pulled the Jewish people out of Egypt at the last moment, from time to time, He does the same for each of us. The sun rises upon us, and suddenly everything feels right, good, and smiles more.

So what do we do now? Do we bask in the moment? Rest a bit? The teachings of Chassidus say: No, no! The right thing to do is to hold onto the beam of light and add more light through human effort. If we do nothing, that sudden beam of light will disappear just as quickly as it came, and we will find ourselves in the same dark place, or perhaps even worse. G-d shines a beam of light from above, so that we should hold on to it and add even more light from below.

Student's pg. 5 **Arousal from below—run**

However, after G-d took the Jewish people out of Egypt, He expected and demanded that they also invest their own effort.

This began especially after the first six days following their departure from Egypt—on the seventh day of Passover, at the splitting of the sea. The splitting of the sea was connected to the self-sacrifice of Nachshon the son of Aminadav, who jumped into the sea. This was an act of actual, practical self-sacrifice.

אמנם, לאחר שהקב"ה הוציא את בני ישראל ממצרים - דרש ותבע מהם שיהיה ענין של עבודה גם מצדם.

וענין זה נפעל בעיקר לאחר ששת הימים הראשונים לצאתם ממצרים, בשביעי של פסח, בעת קריעת ים סוף - שהרי קריעת ים סוף היתה קשורה עם מסירות הנפש של נחשון בן עמינדב, שקפץ לים², שזהו ענין של מסירות נפש במעשה בפועל.

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2. סוטה לז, א. מכילתא בשלח יד, כב.

Source 3 Talmud, Sotah, 37a

When Moses parted the sea, it wasn't as simple as it may sound. The Talmud recounts that the sea didn't part immediately, and the Jewish people were afraid to enter it...

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When Israel stood at the sea, the tribes were arguing with each other... one said: "I will not go into the sea first," and the other said: "I will not go into the sea first." Then Nachshon ben Aminadav jumped into the sea first, as it is said: "Ephraim surrounds Me with lies and the house of Israel with deceit, and Judah is yet wayward toward G-d [rad im E-l]" (Hosea 12:1). This verse can be interpreted homiletically as: And Judah descended [rad] with G-d [im E-l]. The writing of the prophets further explain: "Save me, O G-d, for the waters have come up to my soul... I have sunk in a deep mire, where there is no standing..." "Do not let the floodwaters overwhelm me and do not let the deep swallow me..."

כְּשֶׁעָמְדוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל הַיָּם
הָיוּ שֹׁבְטִים מִנִּצְחִים זֶה עִם
זֶה... זֶה אָמַר: אֵין אֲנִי יוֹרֵד
תְּחִילָה לַיָּם, וְזֶה אָמַר: אֵין
אֲנִי יוֹרֵד תְּחִילָה לַיָּם, קָפֵץ
נַחֲשֹׁן בֶּן עֲמִינָדָב וַיֵּרֵד לַיָּם
תְּחִילָה, שָׁנְאָמַר: "סִבְכָּנִי
בְּכַחַשׁ אֶפְרַיִם וּבְמַרְמָה בֵּית
יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיהוָה עַד רָד עִם
אֵל". וְעָלְיוּ מִפְּרֶשׁ בְּקִבְלָהּ,
"הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי אֱלֹהִים כִּי כָאוּ
מַיִם עַד נַפְשִׁי... טָבַעְתִּי בִּינוֹן
מִצּוֹלָה וְאֵין מַעֲמָד וְגוֹ",
"אֵל תִּשְׁטַפְּנִי שְׂבָלֶת מַיִם
וְאֵל תִּבְלַעֲנִי מִצּוֹלָה וְגוֹ".

>> The Rebbe

Departing with no plans

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This is the point when the practical self-sacrifice of the entire Jewish people began, as the prophet says: "You followed Me into the desert, into a land that was not sown."

While they were still in Egypt, after their forced labor ended on Rosh Hashanah, the people had everything they needed. Egypt was a land blessed with physical abundance. And yet, they left Egypt without even preparing provisions. This shows the greatness of the Jewish people, that they didn't ask, "How will we go out into the desert without supplies?"—they simply had faith and went.

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ואז התחילה גם מסירות הנפש בפועל
של כל בני ישראל שהלכו במדבר -
כדברי הנביא³: "לכתך אחרי במדבר
בארץ לא זרועה":

בהיותם בארץ מצרים - לאחר
ש"בראש השנה בטלה עבודה
מאבותינו במצרים"⁴ - היה לבני ישראל
כל המצטרך להם, שהרי ארץ מצרים
היתה מבורכת בגשמיות כו'. ואף-
על-פי-כן, יצאו ממצרים באופן ש"גם
צדה לא עשו להם"⁵, "מגיד שבחן של
ישראל, שלא אמרו היאך נצא למדבר
בלא צדה, אלא האמינו והלכו כו'".⁶

6. פרש"י עה"פ.

3. ירמ' ב, ב.
4. ר"ה יא, רע"א.
5. בא יב, לט.

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But that was only their decision—they didn't question or resist—but they were still physically in Egypt. The actual self-sacrifice of "you followed Me into the desert, into a land that was not sown," only began after the splitting of the sea, when they entered the desert and found no water.

אלא שזהו רק מה שהחליטו כו' ולא הקשו כו', אבל עדיין היו בארץ מצרים⁷; ואילו מסירות הנפש בפועל של "לכתך אחרי במדבר בארץ לא זרועה"⁸, היתה רק לאחר קריעת ים סוף, שאז יצאו למדבר ולא מצאו מים⁹.

Many tend to mock the complaints of the Jews in the desert about the lack of food and water. However, when reading these words more deeply, we realize that they were actually sacrificing themselves. They set out on a long journey without any plan, without food, without a supply line, without a map, with their children, wives, parents, and everything they had, heading into uncharted wilderness.

This is an immense self-sacrifice of an entire people who believe in G-d and in Moses, His servant. Nachshon's leap into the Red Sea and the people walking in faith after Moses were the actions of the Jewish people on their own part. The Exodus from Egypt was accomplished through G-d's power, from above to below, but the leap into the sea and the journey through the desert were already acts of self-sacrifice on the part of the Jewish people.

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This is what brought about the state described as "we will run after You" (similar to the verse, "for the people had fled")—a mode of going forward that isn't based on comfort or logical reasoning. Because from a logical standpoint, it makes no sense for 600,000 men—plus women and children—to head into an uninhabited desert. It was an act of true self-sacrifice—not just giving up their personal will, but submitting their entire being, even physically, to fulfill G-d's will.

ועל ידי זה נפעל הענין של "נרוצה" (על דרך מה שכתוב¹⁰ "כי ברח העם") - שאין זה באופן של התיישבות, על פי השכל, כי, מצד השכל הפשוט אין מקום להנהגה כזו שששים ריבוא אנשים, לבד מנשים וטף, יצאו למדבר, "ארץ לא זרועה", אלא זוהי הנהגה של מסירות נפש - לא רק מסירת הרצון, אלא מסירת כל מציאותו, אפילו גופו, בשביל קיום רצונו יתברך.

In our spiritual lives – after we receive an arousal from above, and feel a ray of light shining on us from on high, we don't rest on our laurels. Instead, we immediately jump higher and dedicate ourselves to the commandments and path of G-d. Just as the Jewish people leapt into the Red Sea and walked in faith through the desert with self-sacrifice, so too does this apply to each of us who decides to walk in the ways of G-d, without any natural calculations. For example, a person knows that G-d wants them to bring another Jewish child into the world, but the financial calculations

8. שאין זה המדבר שאודותיו אמר משה לפרעה "דרך שלשת ימים נלך במדבר" והסכים פרעה על זהו שלוחו אין צורך במס' כו' [וארא ה, כג-כד].
9. בשלח טו, כב.
10. שם יד, ה.

7. שהרי היה זה ברעמסס, ומשם ק"כ מיל לסוכות וכל זה בתוך ארץ מצרים, ואח"כ "ויחנו באתם אשר בקצה המדבר"². ובפרש"י עה"פ³ "וישובו ויחנו לפני פי החירות... לפני בעל צפון": "הוא פיתום" - ארץ מצרים [1 פרש"י שם, לו. 2 בשלח יג, כ. 3 שם יד, ב].

show that perhaps they do not have enough income to pay for an additional child's tuition, or that these are the years they are building their business, and therefore it is not the best time to have another baby. Yet, a Jew jumps into the sea and walks the path of G-d, even when it appears uncharted. After we have experienced illumination from above and we put in the courage and act in a way that transcends intellect, we merit to have "the King has brought me into His chambers."

Arousal from above—into the king's chambers

Student's It is specifically in this way that the verse "The
pg. 7 King has brought me into His chambers" can be fulfilled—referring to the giving of the Torah.

ודוקא באופן כזה היה יכול להיות
הענין של "הביאני המלך חדריו",
שזהו הענין של מתן תורה:

Understanding the secrets of Torah can only come through self-sacrifice. Why?

Student's The Torah—G-d's wisdom and will which are
pg. 7 beyond the limits of human intellect—is not like other kinds of wisdom that can be grasped through effort alone (as the saying goes: "If you work hard, you will find"). There must be prior preparation—"They first made a blessing for the Torah," and "He chose us from among all the nations." This is a prerequisite for "He gave us His Torah." It is therefore not enough to study the Torah as an intellectual exercise; the learning must be directed toward truth, with the goal of becoming united with G-d.

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התורה - חכמתו ורצונו של הקב"ה
שלמעלה מגדר שכל האנושי - אינה
כמו כל שאר החכמות שמשיגים
אותן על ידי יגיעה בלבד (כמאמר¹¹
"יגעת ומצאת"), אלא יש צורך
בהכנה מוקדמת - "ברכו בתורה
תחלה"¹², "אשר בחר בנו מכל
העמים", שזהו תנאי מוקדם לכך
ש"נתן לנו את תורתו"¹³, ולכן לא די
בהלימוד כשלעצמו, אלא הלימוד
צריך להיות כדי לכוון אל האמת,
ולהתאחד עם הקב"ה כו'¹⁴.

Without that, it's not possible for G-d's will and wisdom to be absorbed into the human mind in such an intimate and profound way (as explained in Tanya).

ולולי זאת, לא יתכן שתהיה
התלבשות רצונו וחכמתו ית' בשכל
האדם באופן של יחוד נפלא כו'
(כמבואר בתניא¹⁵).

Regular wisdom is acquired through effort and talent. If you have innate talent and study diligently, you will understand. The Torah is different. It is not ordinary wisdom; it is the wisdom of G-d. A created being has no chance of understanding the intellect of the Creator. Entirely different worlds. However, in His great kindness, G-d has allowed us created beings to understand the Torah, on the condition that we learn it in the proper and sacred manner.

14. ראה ר"ן שם.
15. פ"ה.

11. מגילה ו, רע"ב.
12. ראה נדרים פא, א. וש"נ.
13. נוסח ברכת התורה.

This is the general idea: to truly receive the Torah, we have to be different from the rest of the world. We have to rise above and step out of the limits and constraints of the world.

This is the deeper meaning of "the land of Egypt." "Egypt" in Hebrew comes from the root meaning narrowness and boundaries. Someone who is still caught in the constraints of the world—like a non-Jew who hasn't left that framework—cannot truly grasp the Torah that is beyond the world. In fact, their learning of Torah can distort the natural order and cause harm.

This is why the experience of "draw me"—that initial, Divine pull from above—is not enough on its own. There also has to be the response from below—"we will run after You." This refers to the act of running, of self-sacrifice that goes beyond reason. It's only through this that the Torah can truly penetrate our inner self—not just our divine soul, but also our natural soul and even our body—because we have lifted ourselves in our entirety beyond the world.

The Torah is the word of G-d, far beyond our reasoning and understanding. The only way to connect with it and comprehend it is if we transcend our own reasoning and understanding. Therefore, only after the Jewish people rose above their natural calculations, jumped into the Red Sea, and followed G-d in faith into the desert – were they able to receive the Torah.

This is also the meaning of the phrase "The King has brought me into His chambers"—in the plural. At first glance, Torah seems to involve only the head, the intellect. So why does the verse use "chambers" in the plural? The answer is that in order to truly "receive" G-d's Torah, it's not enough to involve our intellect. The Torah

וכללות הענין בזה - שכדי לקבל את התורה צריך יהודי להיות שונה מכל העולם, והיינו, להתעלות ולצאת מהמדידה וההגבלה של העולם,

- שזהו כללות הענין של ארץ מצרים, מלשון מיצרים וגבולים¹⁶, ולכן, עכו"ם שנמצא במיצרים וגבולים של העולם, אינו יכול להשיג את התורה שלמעלה מהעולם, ואדרבה: על ידי לימוד התורה הרי הוא משנה סדרי בראשית ומביא לידי קלקול.

וזהו שלא מספיק הענין של "משכני", באופן של אתערותא דלעילא, אלא צריך להיות גם אתערותא דלתתא - "אחריו נרוצה", שזהו ענין של הריצה ומסירת הנפש שלמעלה מן הדעת, ודוקא על ידי זה תוכל התורה לחדור את מציאות האדם בפנימיות, בנפשו האלקית, וגם בנפשו הבהמית ובגופו, מאחר שהפך והעלה אותם למעלה מהעולם.

וזהו גם מה שכתוב "הביאני המלך חדריו", לשון רבים - כי לכאורה, ענין התורה שייך רק לראש האדם ושכלו, ומהו ענין "חדריו" לשון רבים - כי, כדי "לקחת" תורתו של הקב"ה, לא מספיק ענין הראש (שכל) בלבד, אלא התורה צריכה לחדור את כל

¹⁶. ראה תו"א שמות מט, סע"ד ואילך. וארא נז, ב ואילך. יתרו עא, ג ואילך. ובכ"מ.

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must penetrate our entire being—from head to toe—showing that it's not just an intellectual pursuit, but something that transcends worldly limits and reaches every part of who we are.

ציור הקומה, עד לעקב, שבוזה ניכר
שענין התורה אצלו אינו ענין של
שכל בלבד, אלא הוא ענין שלמעלה
מגדרי העולם, שלכן חודר את כל
ציור הקומה שלו.

When people learn regular wisdom, they learn it with their intellect alone. Therefore, they can learn the wisdom, understand it, but act in exactly the opposite way. However, the Torah is not learned with the intellect alone; it is learned with all the elements of the body— with the heart, with the soul, with all the limbs of the body, until it even influences the power of action—the heel.

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The verse concludes, "Let us rejoice and be glad in You," referring to the 22 letters of the Torah. This joy is especially relevant to simple Jews. The giving of the Torah to the Jewish people is expressed most deeply in the fact that the Torah reaches even the "heel"—the lowest level—of the Jewish people, the simple individuals who are not capable of deep learning or intellectual comprehension. Even they experience the joy of "rejoicing and being glad in You," through the 22 letters of the Torah.

ועל זה מסיים "נגילה ונשמחה בך
- בכ"ב אותיות התורה", ששייך
ליהודים פשוטים דוקא, שנתנית
התורה לישראל באה לידי ביטוי
דוקא בכך שהתורה חודרת גם
בבחינת "עקב" שבבני ישראל,
האנשים פשוטים שאינם שייכים
להבנה והשגה, שגם אצלם יש את
הענין של "נגילה ונשמחה בך", על
ידי כ"ב אותיות התורה, שזהו בחינת
הדומם שבתורה¹⁷.

17. ראה לקו"ת חוקת נח, א. ברכה צה, ג. ובכ"מ.

C. The Power of Running

>> The Rebbe

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And we have often discussed, every element in the broader story of the Torah and the Jewish people is also present in the life of each individual. This applies also to that which was said above about "Draw me, we will run after You," in relation to receiving the Torah:

The general theme of the time of the giving of the Torah is "draw me," from weekdays into the festival. But there must also be an element of "we will run," including a literal kind of running, with one's feet.

This talk was said on the holiday of Shavuot. The Rebbe says that the very existence of the holiday is a kind of "draw me." G-d pulls you from the mundane days and places you in the light of the holiday.

But as we have learned, we should not be complacent with the achievement and rest on our laurels. We must make our own effort, and this is reflected in the procession walk.

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This idea is expressed in the custom established by the Rebbe Rayatz, to travel on foot, even to distant places, in order to bring joy to other Jews during the holiday—especially the joy of receiving the Torah.

In the 1950s, the Rebbe introduced a new custom. On the three holidays—the last day of Passover, Shavuot, and Simchat Torah—Chabad chassidim would go out in a tahaluchah, a "procession."

What is this "procession"? Chabad chassidim would leave the Chabad neighborhood of Crown

ועל פי המדובר כמה פעמים שכל הענינים שבכללות התורה וכללות עם ישראל ישנם גם בחייו של כל אחד מישראל - כן הוא גם בנוגע להאמור לעיל בענין "משכני אחריו נרוצה" בשייכות לקבלת התורה:

נוסף לכך שבנוגע לכללות הזמן של קבלת התורה ישנו הענין של "משכני", מימות החול ליום טוב - צריך להיות גם הענין של "נרוצה", כולל גם ריצה כפשוטה, ברגליים.

וענין זה מתבטא במנהג שיסוד כבוד קדושת מורי וחמי אדמו"ר¹⁸ - לילך ברגלים למקומות רחוקים כדי לשמח יהודים בשמחת יום טוב בכלל, ובשמחה של קבלת התורה בפרט.

18. ראה גם שיחת יום ב' דחה"ש דאשתקד (תר"מ ח"מ ע' 54).

Heights in the late afternoon of the holiday, and walk toward other Jewish neighborhoods to join in the joy of the holiday at other synagogues. The goal was to increase unity and joy among the different communities (even today, chassidim do this, and the congregants of various synagogues look forward to the Chabadniks who come from afar, adding to the joy and dancing on Simchat Torah).

Some chassidim would walk to synagogues an hour away, and others would go as far as three hours (from Crown Heights to Queens).

As one might imagine, the walk, which sometimes meant missing the Rebbe's farbrengen, was a significant sacrifice for the chassidim. However, they were driven by the Rebbe's command to go spread joy to other Jews, and they did so with happiness and joy (the return journey was often done in a run, to make it back in time for a few more minutes of the farbrengen).

At this farbrengen, the Rebbe praised the "running" of these chassidim, and asked them to say "L'Chaim!"

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It is fitting that those who have done this in practice should say "lechaim" with real joy and fervor. In doing so, they will bring that joy to all those they visited, and to the Jewish people as a whole—with visible and abundant goodness, for the entire year.

ומהנכון, שאלו שעשו כן בפועל,
יאמרו לחיים, בשמחה ובפנימיות,
ועל ידי זה ימשיכו את השמחה
אצל כל אלו שביקרו אותם, בתוככי
כללות ישראל, בטוב הנראה והנגלה,
על כל השנה כולה¹⁹.

שיחת יום ב' דחג השבועות, ה'תשכ"ה
בלתי מוגה
תורת מנחם חלק מ"ג ע' 371

Key Points:

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- Song of Songs (Shir HaShirim) presents love songs between a man and a woman, which serve as a metaphor for the love between G-d and the Jewish people.
- The verse "Draw me after you, let us run" (Song of Songs 1:4) is interpreted by the Alter Rebbe to allude to three key stages in the history of the Jewish people:

19. יש לציין, שכאשר הקהל חזר מה"תהלוכה", הביע כ"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א את ברכתו (ע"י הרב חזקוני), שכיון שכבר הי' הענין ד"משכני... נרוצה", יהי' גם הענין ד"הביאני המלך חדרי"ו (המו"ל).

"Draw me"—the Exodus from Egypt, a one-sided divine act where the Jewish people were unable to approach G-d on their own.

"We will run after you"—the self-sacrifice of the Jewish people in the wilderness, a voluntary commitment to follow G-d even without clear understanding.

"The King brought me into his chambers"—the revelation at Mount Sinai, where the Jewish people were ready to receive the Torah, understanding it as divine wisdom and surrendering their will to G-d.

The Rebbe's Explanation:

First Stage: "Draw me"—This refers to a divine, one-sided action when the people were unable to approach G-d on their own. In the Exodus from Egypt, G-d drew the Jewish people out of their bondage.

Second Stage: "We will run after you"—This reflects G-d's desire that humans voluntarily approach Him. This is symbolized by Nachshon ben Aminadav's self-sacrifice as he jumped into the Red Sea, and by the Jewish people walking into the desert without provisions, showing their total faith in G-d and their willingness to serve Him beyond rational understanding.

Third Stage: "The King brought me into his chambers"—This indicates that the Jewish people can only receive the Torah when they recognize it as divine wisdom, different from any other form of knowledge. We must nullify our egos, sanctify ourselves, and remember the Giver of the Torah. Only then do we become capable of receiving the light of the Torah.

- Therefore, it was only when the Jewish people demonstrated total self-sacrifice by jumping into the sea and venturing into the desolate wilderness without provisions, out of absolute faith in G-d, that the path was cleared for them to receive the Torah in their hearts. They became worthy vessels for the divine revelation at Sinai.

- When learning Torah with humility and emotional connection to G-d, even a simple person who doesn't possess high intellectual abilities can experience joy in Torah, because Torah can penetrate into their soul.

Takeaway:

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Sometimes, we experience a special spiritual awakening during a Torah class or a moving prayer, but after returning to our daily routines, the excitement fades, and so does the spiritual sensation. It's important to understand that the awakening is just the first step. The next and most important step is to take that spark of inspiration and turn it into action, to make a good decision and initiate a small change within ourselves. This could mean strengthening a new mitzvah observance, increasing our love for fellow Jews, or making other meaningful adjustments. In this way, the excitement will not just be a fleeting experience but will genuinely transform our lives.